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BULLETIN

OF

The National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis

Vol. II. JANUARY, 1916. No. 4.

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The Children's National Tuberculosis Society

Since The National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis last published a statement in February, 1915, relative to the Children's National Tuberculosis Society with headquarters at Chicago and Dr. Paul Burmaster, its secretary, the scope of operations of this society has become so extended, and the inquiries relative to the character of the organization have become so numerous, that it is necessary to make a further and more up-to-date report.

The Children's National Tuberculosis Society was incorporated under the Laws of the State of Illinois in March, 1913. According to its charter the society is to have the following purposes:

> "To provide homes and accommodations for persons afflicted with tuberculosis, or who are subject to tuberculosis and other ailments; to operate and maintain homes and camps throughout the United States which will be beneficial to such persons; to provide facilities for giving vocational training to such persons; to render educational assistance in arts and trades which will be beneficial to them, and generally to assist such persons directly and indirectly to better their health and general conditions; to publish such literature as the directors shall deem expedient relative to their work."

At the time of its incorporation the officers of the society were Dr. Cyrille Vermeren, president; Dr. David H. Reeder, vice-president; Dr. Paul Burmaster, secretary, and a well known lawyer, treasurer, who severed his relations with the society in the spring of 1915.

It should be noted that while the charter of the society grants very broad powers in the treatment and prevention of tuberculosis, it makes no specific mention of children. Since the organization of the society, however, the principal method of financing has been through the sale of a small magazine, generally of about sixteen pages, originally called "Our Tubercular Children," but later renamed more correctly "Our Tuberculous Children." The magazine is sold ordinarily for ten cents per copy. It is claimed that the net proceeds from the sale of this publication are devoted to the maintenance of an institution at Alamogordo, N. M., known as "Mountainair," which, according to the magazine and other published statements of the society, is known as a "home for tuberculous children."

Magazine Sales Methods

The magazine is sold by solicitors, mostly women, in offices, stores, on the street and elsewhere. District or local agents are appointed by the society, who in turn secure solicitors either on a commission or on a salary basis, generally the former. According to a statement said to have been made by one of the society's representatives, G. Wesley Patterson, when the organization was operating in Cleveland, the society allows 40 per cent commission to the solicitors, 20 per cent to the district or local agent—in this case Mr. Patterson—and 40 per cent, the remainder, goes to the home office. When solicitors are selling out of town or at a distance from the district office, they are allowed a 50 per cent commission without expenses. Out of the 20 per cent received by the district agent he must get his salary and office expenses. It is claimed that Patterson stated to a special agent of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, that "a girl can sell from 75 to 100 or even 150 pamphlets a day. Miss —— sold 90 books on Saturday. She sells between 65 and 75 every day. I have four agents on the West Side and three on the East Side. One girl is only about nineteen years of age. Her name is Miss ——, a society girl. Her mother goes in the best society and the father does not know she is doing this work. She brought in $28 in subscriptions yesterday, and yet she does not work all the time."

In a conference held on May 4, 1915, at the Executive Office of The National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis, between Dr. Burmaster and representatives of the National Association, Dr. Burmaster stated that at that time he had approximately 5,000 regular subscribers for his magazine, and that during the month of April he had sold between 60,000 and 65,000 copies, and during the previous month between 40,000 and 45,000 copies. He stated that 50,000 copies was about the average monthly sale at that time.

Audit of Books Made

From the figures above given it will be noted that generally not more than four cents out of every ten received for one of the publications reaches the home office. Out of this four cents Dr. Burmaster must pay for the cost of publication and distribution of the magazine and the incidental executive or administrative expenses of the home office, and presumably his own personal, traveling, and other expenses. Whatever is left is available for maintenance of the home at Alamogordo. At the urgent request of a number of organizations, the books of the society were audited in March, 1915. The following statement is from the auditor's report:

BULLETIN OF
THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY AND PREVENTION OF TUBERCULOSIS

Published Monthly

In the Interest of Workers Engaged in the Anti-Tuberculosis Movement by

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY AND PREVENTION OF TUBERCULOSIS
105 EAST 22ND STREET, NEW YORK CITY

Vol. II. JANUARY, 1916. No. 4.

Entered as Second Class Matter October 21, 1914, at the Postoffice at New York, N. Y., under the Act of August 24, 1912.

OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

President

DR. THEODORE B. SACHS, - - Chicago, Ill.

Vice-Presidents

DR. E. R. BALDWIN, - Saranac Lake, N. Y.
DR. CHRISTEN QUEVLI, - Tacoma, Wash.

Secretary

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE
105 East 22nd Street, New York City

DR. CHARLES J. HATFIELD, *Executive Secretary*
PHILIP P. JACOBS, PH.D., *Assistant Secretary*
CHARLES M. DEFOREST, - *Field Secretary*
FREDERICK D. HOPKINS, - *Field Secretary*

RECEIPTS

Balance, January 1, 1914..		$ 1,162.16
Subscriptions and sale of booklets.....	$22,801.08	
Collected from patients and sundry receipts.....	207.45	23,008.53
		$24,170.69

DISBURSEMENTS

Cost of printing and material for monthly publication.....	$ 4,419.99	
General expenses, including wages of employees of Secretary's office, express and postage, and solicitor's expenses.....	3,844.23	
	$ 8,264.22	
Home Expenses:		
General maintenance... $3,898.95		
Improvements and furnishings..... 3,361.54		
	$ 7,260.49	
Interest on mortgage.....	480.00	16,004.71
		$ 8,165.98
Add unpresented checks...		97.50
Balance March 18, 1915 .		$ 8,263.48
Represented by		
Cash in bank.....	$ 3,967.96	
Cash on hand.....	295.52	
Certificates of deposit	4,000.00	$ 8,263.48

As will be noted from the statement, the gross receipts for the period of fifteen months amounted approximately to $23,000, exclusive of a balance of about $1,100 on hand at the beginning of the period. The auditor, in commenting on the condition of the books, remarks about the laxity in the keeping of records, and states that on this account "no very satisfactory audit could be made." As will be noted, no statement of the commissions paid to solicitors is included in this audit. The receipts of $23,000 include apparently only the net amount received from the sale of publications, etc., by the home office. Computing on this basis, the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce estimates that by adding the remaining 60 per cent that was paid to solicitors, the total receipts of the society for the period of fifteen months must have exceeded $50,000. The Curran Committee of the Illinois State Legislature, estimating in a similar manner, states: "This item of $22,801.08 is but 40 per cent, therefore, of what has been collected from the public, so that the total collections must have been $57,002."

The statement of disbursements is also apparently incomplete in that it is not sufficiently itemized. The general expenses of the Executive Office, including the cost of printing, were a little over $8,000. The expenses of the "home" at Alamogordo amounted to about $8,000. This left the society a balance of about a similar amount, on March 18, 1915. Dr. Burmaster has repeatedly stated that he does not draw any salary, and that neither he nor any of the other officers of the society receives any remuneration for his services. Nothing in the financial report would indicate what Dr. Burmaster has received from the society for expenses in traveling and otherwise. According to an interview with a representative of the Chicago *Herald*, reported in the issue of that paper on November 12, 1915, Dr. L. D. Rogers, with some of whose various projects Dr. Burmaster was connected, stated of Dr. Burmaster: "After he left me he started that tuberculosis society and has made a success out of a ten-cent proposition. He has a perfectly wonderful institution and a bank account, too, I am told, and he doesn't draw a cent for it, either."

Magazine Publishes Statement

On the back cover of the magazine entitled "Our Tuberculous Children," is published a statement headed, "The Aim of this Society," which reads as follows:

> "The aim of this society is to help in the prevention of the white plague by education, using the profits from the sale of its publication and memberships in maintaining our Home, where worthy tuberculous children are cared for free of charge, including free transportation.
>
> "We admit children from anywhere in the United States without regard to denomination.
>
> "The fact that most orphan asylums and other similar institutions refuse admission to tuberculous children for fear of infecting their well children, makes the need of such an institution as ours self-evident. If you have bought a copy of this book and our cause does not meet with your approval, please return the book with your name and address and the price with postage will be refunded to you.
>
> "If this work appeals to you, we shall be glad to receive your application for a year's Associate Membership, annual fee, $1.00; a Fellowship Certificate, annual fee, $2.00; or for a Supporting Membership, annual fee, $5.00."

In a recent number of this same publication (received from Louiseville, Ky., on December 23, 1915, and marked Volume 3, No. 3), the following statement with regard to the placing of children in the "home" is made:

> "The only requirements for placing a child into our Institution are a certificate from a physician, the parents or guardians' consent and that the parents are poor. There is no red tape and we assume all expense, including railroad fare."

Conference with Dr. Burmaster

When questioned at the conference above referred to in the office of the National Association with regard to the policy of taking children at considerable distances from their homes to an institution in Alamogordo, N. M., Dr. Burmaster stated that the children for whom the institution was originally intended were homeless children, and that it was not their idea to take children out of homes where they might be near parents under normal circumstances. He said, "Our original idea was to take children from homes and asylums and to teach them outdoor occupations." When questioned with regard to the children in the home at that particular time, Dr. Burmaster stated that there were approximately eleven children in the sanatorium and three adults; this on May 4, 1915. Of the children in the institution at that time, four, according to Dr. Burmaster's statement, were homeless and six were indigent or without proper home care. One case was paying $50 a month. All the children at the institution were from distant points. About seven of them, Dr. Burmaster stated, were from Michigan. It should be noted in comparing the statements quoted from the recent publication of the magazine that no mention is made of receiving adults. According to Dr. Burmaster's own statement, there were three adults in the institution on May 4, 1915. Neither is there any reference made in the statements quoted nor in any of the other statements of the magazine to the effect that children or others are required to pay for treatment. One of the statements above quoted specifically says, "There is no red tape and we assume all expense, including railroad fare." According to Dr. Burmaster's own statement, one of the eleven children in the institution on May 4 was paying $50 a month.

At the time of the conference with Dr. Burmaster, above referred to, he agreed to furnish certain information to the National Association, such as the exact date of opening of the sanatorium, about which there was apparently some doubt; the exact bed capacity and number of patients in the institution on two specific dates; information as to the places of residence and other data concerning patients and applicants to the sanatorium; information as to the details of cost of operation of the sanatorium; and a copy of the auditor's financial statement. None of this information has been received from Dr. Burmaster, although he has twice been requested to furnish it since the conference of May 4. The references

above made to the auditor's statement are copied from a copy of this statement furnished to the National Association by the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce.

The Alamogordo "Home"

The institution at Alamogordo is located on a tract of twelve acres. The property originally belonged to the New Mexico Baptist College and was donated to the society on condition that Dr. Burmaster assume the mortgage on the property. Dr. Burmaster was unable to state at the conference of May 4 when the institution was opened, but according to the best information available it was probably in July or August of 1914. There have never been, according to any reports available, more than seventeen or eighteen patients at the sanatorium. According to Dr. Burmaster, the society has spent about $15,000 in improving the property. Recent statements in the Chicago papers quote Dr. Burmaster as saying by telegraph from Alamogordo to the Chicago *Herald*, "I am here (in Alamogordo) to turn over the property to local people. The deal is not far enough advanced yet to say who these people are. We have paid all indebtedness on the institution and have spent $15,000."

The Officers

With regard to the officers of the society, the names of the officers were originally published in each issue of the magazine. The last issue, however, which has been received by the National Association (December 23, 1915), does not contain the list of officers. Since a society of this character cannot very well be judged without knowing something as to the standing of its officers in their several professions and in the community at large, and also concerning their past history and previous operations, a brief mention of such facts as are known concerning them is given:

Dr. Burmaster

DR. BURMASTER was for a number of years closely connected with and associated in professional and business capacity with Dr. L. D. Rogers, formerly of the National Medical University. The National Medical University was, according to the report of the Carnegie Foundation on "Medical Education in the United States and Canada," by Abraham Flexner, "ostensibly the medical department of the Chicago Night University, which claims departments of art, law, dentistry, pharmacy, etc. The school appears to be owned by the dean [Rogers]. . . . The school occupies a badly lighted building containing nothing that can be dignified by the name of equipment. There had been no dissecting thus far (October to the middle of April), anatomy being didactically taught. Persistent inquiry for the 'dissecting room' was, however, finally rewarded by the sight of a dirty, unused and almost inaccessible room containing a putrid corpse, several of the members of which had been hacked off. . . . Recently this school has been declared by the Illinois State Board of Health as 'not in good standing.'"

The school is not now in operation, having gone out of business following an investigation by the police authorities of Chicago, in which it is alleged a corpse was discovered buried in the back yard of the hospital connected with the school. Dr. Burmaster, according to the annual announcement of this University, was given as Professor of Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat. In another report he is given as secretary and a member of the board of directors. Dr. Rogers, in a statement to a representative of the Chicago *Herald*, published in that paper November 12, 1915, says in answer to the following question:

"Was Dr. Burmaster associated with you in the National Maternity Hospital?"

"Yes, for more than fifteen years. He used to live at my house."

The National Maternity Hospital was another one of the enterprises with which Rogers has been connected, and which has since been closed by the authorities. Dr. Burmaster himself is a graduate of the Hahnemann Medical College of Chicago, receiving a license to practice in the State of Illinois in 1896 and in New Mexico in 1912.

Reeder, M.D. (?)

Of *DR. DAVID H. REEDER*, the vice-president of the Children's National Tuberculosis Society, more information is available. In a recent article published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* for December 11, 1915, a careful statement is made with reference to Reeder and his various connections. So far as *The Journal of the American Medical Association* has been able to find out, Reeder is not a physician. While some of his publications give him the Degree of M.D. and Ph.D., others give him the Degrees of "D.O." and "Ph.D." Reeder is president and largest stockholder of the Home Remedies Company, originally of LaPorte, Indiana, but now of Chicago. The company is a patent-medicine concern that sells its remedies on the mail-order plan. The Home Health Club, which is apparently a "feeder" for the Home Remedies Company, is also conducted by Reeder. Members of the Home Health Club are secured in the following manner: Reeder furnishes copy for "health departments" conducted under the title, "Home Health Club," to various newspapers that are gullible enough to take it. From the answers to inquiries of these various departments, the Home Health Club is built up. Those who apply to the Home Health Club for information receive letters from Reeder in which he generally refers the applicant to a volume of the Home Health Club's books at the price of one dollar or more per volume, and also suggests that they get certain remedies manufactured by the Home Remedies Company. Different addresses for the Home Health Club and the Home Remedies Company are given, although they are both in the same building. Commenting on Reeder's advice to a woman with cancer, that she use certain remedies from his company and forego a surgical operation, *The Journal of the American Medical Association* says: "Any man who declares that many women with cancer of the breast have been fully restored to health without surgery falsifies. If he does this knowingly, and for the purpose of selling some wretched nostrums, he is a scoundrel; if he falsifies unknowingly, from the depths of abysmal ignorance, he is a dangerous quack." Summarizing its article on Reeder, this same *Journal* says: "The matter sent out by the Home Health Club, whether it be the so-called Home Health Club volumes, letters of 'advice,' HOME HEALTH, the official organ of the Home Health Club, or what not, has for its final object the exploitation of the nostrums sold by Reeder under the name of Home Remedies Company. The entire business is one of deception, misrepresentation and fraud. The newspapers are deceived into accepting the Home Health Club copy, the public is deceived by leading it to believe, inferentially, that there is no connection between the 'patent medicine' concern — The Home Remedies Company — and the Home Health Club itself. Reeder's writings stand as monuments to his ignorance and his methods indicate a disregard for elementary truthfulness and common honesty."

President Vermeren

As to *DR. CYRILLE VERMEREN*, the president of the Children's National Tuberculosis Society, he, too, seems to have been closely allied with Rogers in his various enterprises. According to the records of the American Medical Association, he is a graduate of Rogers' National Medical University, and was professor at one time of Psycho-Therapeutics at that institution. He was also on the consulting staff of physicians at the "National Emergency Hospital," and was one of the incorporators with Burmaster of the "International Association of Pan-Pathic Physicians."

In the conference with the National Association above referred to, Dr. Burmaster defended his connection with the National Medical University and L. D. Rogers by saying that there were other physicians in Chicago of more or less prominence who were connected with this institution in a teaching capacity and whose reputations were apparently not injured by this relation. With regard to David H. Reeder, Dr. Burmaster did not attempt to defend him in any way, except to state that he had always found him a pleasant gentleman and that his home life was, so far as he knew, above reproach. He admitted that he knew that Reeder was writing health articles for papers, but disclaimed any knowledge of his apparent connection with any questionable enterprise. It should be noted, however, that although Reeder's connections with the Home Health Club and the Home Remedies Company were called to Dr. Burmaster's attention by the *Bulletin* of the National Association of February, 1915, and although the conference above referred to was on May 4, 1915, Reeder was still, in August, 1915, the latest definite date available, an officer of the society and, so far as the National Association knows, is at this writing.

In November, 1915, to one of his Home Health Club articles on cancer, Reeder appends this paragraph:

"I have recently been informed by the secretary of the Children's National Tuberculosis Society that they have room for five or six more children. The society will take any tubercular child that is in need of a home and treatment, no matter

where it lives, and will pay its traveling expenses to the home, and there it will be cared for, clothed and educated. There is no expense to the child of any kind, as the work is a pure charity and is without profit to any one but the children."

It would seem from this that Burmaster was not averse to having Reeder advertise the Children's National Tuberculosis Society.

Society Under Investigation

The Children's National Tuberculosis Society has recently been under investigation by a special committee of the Illinois State Legislature. As a result of this investigation, the State of Illinois has brought proceedings against Burmaster and the Children's National Tuberculosis Society for the annulment of its charter. While these proceedings have not thus far progressed to any definite conclusion, those who are in close touch with the matter report to the National Association that the charter of the society will probably be anulled.

The operations of the society have been seriously interfered with and in some instances entirely stopped in a number of cities. Through the activity of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, the society has suspended operations in that city. The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce has published a pamphlet entitled, "Did They Get Any of Your Money," dealing with the Children's National Tuberculosis Society, a limited number of copies of which are at the disposal of the National Tuberculosis Association for distribution to those who will find them of value.

The Board of Trade of Minneapolis has taken some action against the Children's National Tuberculosis Society and has succeeded in stopping the operations of the society in that city. A report upon the activities of the agents of the society is being prepared for publication. During the month of October, 1915, the activities of the society were stopped in Milwaukee, due to action of the Merchants and Manufacturers Association and the District Attorney's office. In Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Omaha, Akron, O.; Dallas, Texas; Kansas City, Mo.; Dayton, O; Toledo, and a considerable number of other cities agents of the society have met with serious opposition on the part of the city and charitable authorities.

Summary

In summarizing its statement on the Children's National Tuberculosis Society, *The Journal of the American Medical Association* says: "Summed up, then, the 'Children's National Tuberculosis Society' is a self-styled charitable organization in which the bulk of the funds collected seems to go not to the charity in question, but to those who collect them. Three of the officers of the 'Society' claim to be doctors. Two of these three have been connected with medical enterprises of a questionable nature, while the third is apparently not a physician, but engaged, among other things, in the 'patent-medicine' business. Reputable associations of business men and reputable organizations for the study and prevention of tuberculosis that have investigated the concern have refused to approve, endorse or countenance the policy or methods of the 'Children's National Tuberculosis Society.'"

The National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis does not endorse the Children's National Tuberculosis Society, nor does it approve or countenance its policy or methods.

Academic Publishing Company

So many inquiries have been received regarding the Academic Publishing Company of New York, and Mr. George Szirmay, the managing editor of the company, that a brief statement of the nature of the work proposed by this concern seems advisable.

The Academic Publishing Company is planning to prepare a history of the American Campaign against Tuberculosis, and is soliciting support and co-operation from individuals, associations and institutions in all parts of the United States. The history will consist in general of parts, the first an historical survey or introduction, and the second a series of sketches of men and women prominent in various fields of tuberculosis work, with special reference to their activities in the anti-tuberculosis campaign. These sketches will be arranged in sections, thus, the pathologists, bacteriologists and research workers in one section; the clinicians in another; the social workers in another; the large financial contributors in another; health officers and public-health officials in another, etc. Accompanying each biography will be a portrait of the individuals in question. Excerpts from published works and specially prepared articles will also accompany certain of the biographies. It is proposed as an appendix to publish a selected bibliography.

To defray the expenses of the first edition of the work, which is to be published in an elaborate manner, subscriptions will be solicited from those eligible to be included in the same. This fact, however, will not influence the exclusion or inclusion of any one of a determined group of individuals, irrespective of their willingness or ability to lend the enterprise any financial support. Charges, ranging from $75 to $300, will be made for insertion of portraits and sketches in the book.

Mr. Szirmay has given his personal assurance to the National Association that the work which is being planned will be carried out on the highest possible ethical and scientific planes, and that every effort will be made to include in the work only those men and women whose contributions to the anti-tuberculosis movement are of real significance, and to exclude those whose reputation and work are open to question. So far as can be ascertained, there is nothing of a questionable nature involved in Mr. Szirmay's project. Certain things, which might be inherent in the method of preparation of the book are of a personal nature and must be decided upon by each individual approached. Mr. Szirmay proposes that each person who is invited to subscribe to the work shall have the privilege of seeing a list of all other possible subscribers, so that he may know in advance who is likely to be in the book.

Have Anti-Tuberculosis Associations Finished Work?

Under the heading, "Is the Work of Anti-Tuberculosis Associations Finished?" the Massachusetts Anti-Tuberculosis League has issued a statement which is of importance not only to workers in that State, but throughout the national field.

It is worthy of special note that the statement is signed by the State Commissioner of Health, the Chairman of the State Board of Trustees of Hospitals for Consumptives, and the President of the State Anti-Tuberculosis League.

The statement is as follows:

"Because the State is requiring the construction of tuberculosis hospitals and the maintenance of tuberculosis dispensaries, the impression has gone abroad that there is no further need for anti-tuberculosis associations and committees interested in the suppression of tuberculosis.

"The signers of this statement wish to do what they can to counteract this impression. We believe that the active co-operation of anti-tuberculosis associations with state and local authorities is necessary, and will continue to be necessary as long as tuberculosis exists.

"An anti-tuberculosis association should stand as the representative of the people at large in any given community. Its function should be to act for the people, to see that the health officials, both local and state, are suitable men and do their full duty in carrying out the anti-tuberculosis laws and ordinances, and such other regulations as are intended to reduce the mortality from tuberculosis, and that the required institutions are maintained in conformity with proper standards.

"We have in this State some good laws which, if made effective, will help materially in reducing the ravages of tuberculosis. A representative organization, such as an anti-tuberculosis association, is in a position to see, not only that these laws are enforced, but also that sufficient appropriations are secured, without which it is difficult to do effective work for the maintenance of local and state departments.

"Instead, therefore, of recommending that anti-tuberculosis organizations should go out of existence, we strongly urge the establishment in every community in the state of an organization of this kind, either as an independent body, or as a committee of some already existing organization that is interested in health or civic matters.

"Allan J. McLaughlin, M.D.
Commissioner of Health of Massachusetts.

"Arthur K. Stone, M.D.
Chairman, Trustees of Massachusetts Hospitals for Consumptives.

"Vincent Y. Bowditch, M.D.
President Massachusetts Anti-Tuberculosis League."